

Message Text

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ACTION COA-02

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 L-03 DLOS-06 EB-11 SCI-06 INT-08

COME-00 CG-00 DOTE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-04 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-03 NSF-04 FEA-02 SSO-00

INRE-00 DRC-01 /094 W

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O R 082030Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5984

INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 2524

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TPHY, PBOR, XN

SUBJECT: DRILLSHIP GLOMAR CHALLENGER

REF STATE 58485

1. IN CLOSE COLLABORATION WITH SCRIPPS LOGISTICS OFFICER, EMBASSY PULLED OUT ALL STOPS IN TRYING CONVINCE ARGENTINE NAVY OF IMPORTANCE OF CHALLENGER MISSION AND NEED FOR FUEL AT USHUAIA. AS STATED REFTTEL, FUEL AT USUAIA WAS CRITICALLY LOW FOR REASONS QUITE UNRELATED TO CHALLENGER. NAVAL ATTACHE BEGAN CONTACTS PRIOR HIS DEPARTURE FOR US WITH ADM ROCCATAGLIATA (NAVY POLICY & STRATEGY CHIEF). CONTACTS WITH NAVY HAVE CONTINUED BY SCIATT.

2. SITUATION APPEARED QUITE GRIM RIGHT THRU MOST OF 29 MARCH. ALTERNATIVE OF COMMODORE RIVADAVIA PROVED NOT RPT NOT TOO FEASIBLE AS PORT CONDITIONS THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN QUITE DANGEROUS FOR CHALLENGER. NEAREST AVAILABLE FUEL IN ARGENTINA WAS AT OR NEAR BAHIA BLANCA.

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3. EMBASSY WAS INFORMED MID-AFTERNOON 29 MARCH THAT NAVY HAD DECIDED (AT HIGHEST LEVEL WE ARE CERTAIN) THAT IT WOULD SUPPLY 400 CUBIC METERS TO CHALLENGER ON ITS ARRIVAL USUAIA.

4. FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM USUAIA, SCRIPPS LOGISTICS OFFICER INFORMED US THAT SHIP HAD TAKEN ON 238 CUBIC METERS OF ONE KIND OF FUEL AND 19 CUBIC METERS OF ANOTHER TYPE. SHIP DEPARTED USUAIA APPROX ON SCHEDULE WITH LONARDI ON BOARD AND PLANNED CONDUCT OPERATIONS FOR LEG 36 AS PREVIOUSLY PLANNED.

5. MEANWHILE, ARGENTINE NAVY OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN CALLING EMBASSY TO LEARN OF SHIP'S PROGRESS. TODAY (APR 8), ADM ROCCATAGLIATA RAISED WITH SCIATT QUESTION OF WHY CHALLENGER HAD NOT SOUGHT GOA PERMISSION SINCE IT WAS DOING RESEARCH WITHIN 200 MILES OF ARGENTINA. ROCCATAGLIATA SUGGESTED THAT APPLICATION FOR SUCH PERMISSION BE FILED IMMEDIATELY AS THIS WAS MATTER OF GREAT CONCERN TO ARGENTINA. SCIATT NOTED THAT THERE NO REQUIREMENT UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW FOR AUTHORIZATION OF SUCH RESEARCH IN DEEP WATER; ALSO THAT LONARDI WAS ABOARD. WHILE ADMITTING THIS, ROCCATAGLIATA NONETHELESS QUITE INSISTENT THAT AUTHORIZATION BE SOUGHT.

6. COMMENT. WE UNABLE ASCERTAIN WHAT ACTION ARGENTINE NAVY MAY TAKE IF AUTHORIZATION NOT SOUGHT OR GRANTED, BUT POTENTIAL FOR NASTY INCIDENT CERTAINLY EXISTS.

7. ACTION REQEUSTED. NOTIFY CHALLENGER OF PROBLEM IMMEDIATELY AND PROVIDE EMBASSY WITH INSTRUCTIONS IF DECISION MADE TO SEEK GOA AUTHORIZATION.
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